

SHARING YOUR FAMILY HISTORY

By Douglas Parks

Sharing our family's stories throughout the year has increased our appreciation for our ancestors and brought us closer as a family.

As members of the Church, we are taught how important families are, and the more we learn about our families, the more we can grow to love them.

Our family has found this to be true as we've employed several different methods of sharing our family's history throughout the year. The following are two ways that have proved particularly successful for us.

Family Calendars

One year we created a calendar for family members. For each month

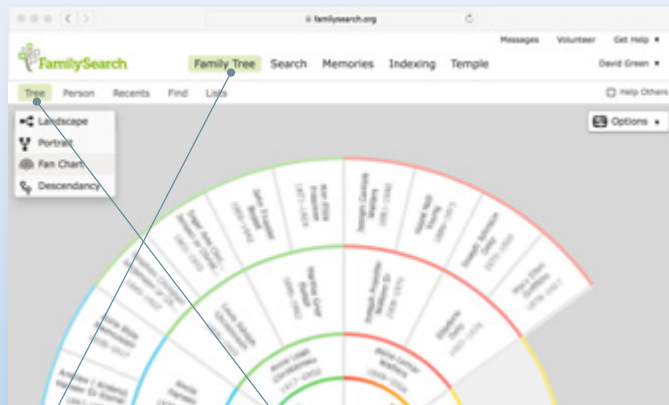
there was a calendar on the bottom half, and on the top were photos of the individuals (living and dead) who had birthdays or marriages during that specific month. On the calendar portion we noted events on the day they took place. Our family loved it because we could include photos they hadn't seen before and they would see the calendar every day of the year. Seeing photos and important life events on the calendar was a helpful way to remember and appreciate our ancestors and living family members.



PHOTOGRAPH PROVIDED BY AUTHOR

ANCESTOR INFORMATION I INCLUDED IN EMAILS TO MY FAMILY

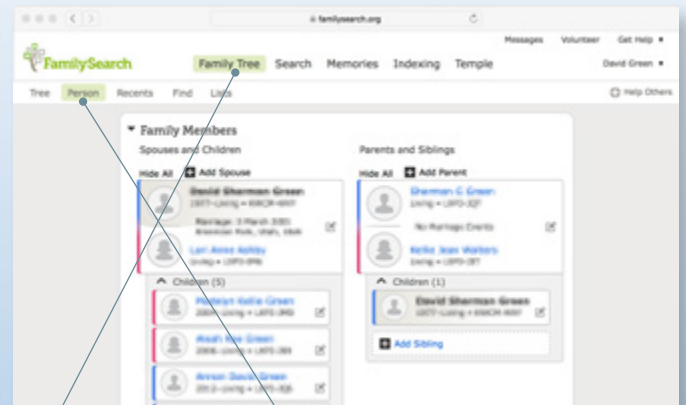
Charts: a pedigree chart and a relationship chart so that we could all see how we were related. (You can find this kind of information on FamilySearch.org and other partner websites.)



Step 1

2

Group sheet: a family group sheet showing the ancestor, the ancestor's spouse and children, and notes to help document the ancestor's story, along with a few of my own personal comments. (Family group sheet templates are available at FamilySearch.org.)



Step 1

2

Group Emails

One year I decided to send to family members a group email about a specific ancestor on the ancestor's birthday. The sidebar below describes the items I included and gives suggestions for doing something similar yourself.

All of this may sound like a lot of work, but it isn't if you do a little at a time. It was great fun to put together as well.

The group emails were a big success because we could share experiences and memories about the birthday ancestor. We also found that some of the stories and experiences of our ancestors touched the hearts of different living family members.

Learning how our ancestors dealt with issues of success and failure, hardships, migration, advanced age, loss, and war was an inspiration. It showed us that we too can overcome the problems we face in our own day, just as they did. The emails gave us a clearer picture of who they were in their specific time and place in history and how their environment helped shape them as people. By taking one ancestor and his or her family at a time, it was almost like visiting with them on a Sunday afternoon.

Sharing our family's stories has brought immeasurable joy. I can truly say our hearts have turned toward each other. ■

The author lives in Pennsylvania, USA.



BINDING HEARTS TOGETHER

"Write down what you already know about your family. . . . If you learn stories about their lives, write them down and keep them. You are not just gathering names. Those you never met in life will become friends you love. Your heart will be bound to theirs forever."

President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency,
"Hearts Bound Together," *Ensign*, May 2005, 79.

Find four more ways to share family history at lds.org/go/shareE318.

Photographs: pictures of the ancestor, if available. (Be sure that you upload your photographs and tag the people in the photos on the Memories page at FamilySearch.org. Photos, stories, documents, and recordings can be sorted by title, event, and place.)



Stories: accounts about the ancestor that were either printed or passed down verbally through the years. (When you add stories to FamilySearch, you can easily find them again, and other family members will be able to have access to them as well.)

